



**Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing
February 17, 2009**

Submitted by: Lynn Taborsak, Climate Change Specialist
Comments on:

The Governor's Budget Proposal for 2010-2011

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a non-partisan, statewide organization comprised of over 2,100 members committed to effective public policy and the active involvement of citizens in their government. On behalf of the League, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Governor's proposed budget and its impact on our progress toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It is understandable for the Governor to use the rainy day fund for the purpose for which it was intended. However, the League is very concerned about the proposal to "securitize" the Clean Energy Fund and transfer almost \$100 million from other energy conservation funds to cover general fund operating expenses.

These funds were created as part of electric restructuring in 1998 to encourage conservation, efficiency and the use of renewable energy. A surcharge on electric bills creates a revenue stream that finances all kinds of residential, commercial and municipal conservation and efficiency programs. In addition, in 2004 the surcharge was increased and power providers were required to obtain up to 20% of their power from renewable sources. As a result, the Clean Energy Fund, through its grant process has funded renewable energy projects in 78% of all Connecticut towns using \$161 million of ratepayer funds for fuel cell, hydro, solar, and biofuel generation systems.

We have to applaud the vision of the legislature in 1998 for making our state a national leader in the development of clean, renewable energy and conservation programs that reduce fossil fuel emissions. In these difficult economic times, we are poised for economic growth with our cutting-edge renewable technologies. We are "shovel-ready" for the federal green energy stimulus adopted this month by the U.S. Congress.

The \$3.82 surcharge on my January electric bill is not a general fund revenue. It is an investment in Connecticut's energy security. The League of Women Voters believes that the revenues for renewable energy and conservation should be used for the purposes for which they were created.